

DMCPS Background and Recommendation for Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council Committees

At the recent bylaws committee meeting, a discussion ensued about some of the Partnership Council committees that currently exist under the MCWPC bylaws. DMCPS offered up some historical information about the committees as well as discussed possible changes to the committee structures. It was suggested that a larger conversation needs to happen within the partnership council as a whole regarding the future of the committees. This document has been prepared to share summarized information as well as DCMPS recommendations. Additional documents, including committee meeting materials and minutes, are available at the linked [DCF website](#).

Critical Incident Committee

The Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council is a designated citizen review panel recognized by DCF and organized pursuant to federal CAPTA law. As a citizen review panel, the Partnership Council has historically conducted case reviews of the Act 78 cases which qualify for a practice review under DCF policy and state statute. The Critical Incident committee was created as a dedicated space for discussing those practice reviews as some of the information is confidential under Wisconsin law and, therefore, the bulk of the meetings are conducted in closed sessions. The critical incident committee as it currently operates meets quarterly if there is a new case to review. If there are no Act 78 cases which qualify for a practice review, the committee does not meet. The goal is to create systems change and practice recommendations to bring to the full partnership council.

There are 3 partnership council members designated as committee members and all partnership council members are invited to attend the meetings. Over the past 5 years, the committee has met with this frequency:

2018 1 meeting
2019 no meetings
2020 1 meeting
2021 3 meetings
2022 1 scheduled

DMCPS Recommendation: keep this committee, discuss whether there are additional cases or quality improvement efforts that would be of value to bring to this committee. This might require some tweaking of the bylaws language about the committee.

Health and Education Committee

The Health and Education committee has been operating for many years. According to the bylaws, it shall “address issues related to the physical, mental and dental health of children served by the Division, and issues related to the education of children served by the Division.” Membership on this committee has been a challenge. For years, Christine Holmes- who chaired the committee- was often the only partnership council member who regularly attended these meetings. In the past, the committee has heard presentations by the Institute for Research and

Poverty on educational achievement as it relates to foster care, heard data report outs from the DMCPs educational liaisons, and discussed Care 4 Kids (the foster care medical home) updates and outcomes. The meeting is well attended by system stakeholders but not by partnership council members.

There are supposed to be 3 partnership council members designated as committee members and all partnership council members are invited to attend the meetings. This committee is currently without a chair. A motion to name co-chairs was made at last year's committee but this is not clearly permitted by the current bylaws and efforts to get a meeting scheduled so far have been unsuccessful. Over the past 5 years, the committee has met with the following frequency:

2018 3 scheduled- not all occurred due to quorum issues

2019 no meetings

2020 1 meeting

2021 1 meeting

2022 none to date

DMCPs Recommendation: Eliminate this as a partnership council committee. Bring the same types of presentations to the full council meetings and keep a working stakeholder workgroup on this topic. Partnership council members can still be added to the invitation of the stakeholder workgroup.

Out-of-Home Care Committee

This committee has struggled to keep active over the years. According to the bylaws, the committee "shall address issues relating to services for children who have been removed from their homes, recruitment, licensing, support and training of Foster care and placement resources. This Committee shall also address issues related to adoption." In the past, the committee has discussed pending federal legislation, heard presentations on data or issues relating to youth in care, or discussed stakeholder partnerships regarding youth in care. When Judge Crivello chaired the committee in 2021, it met often, but is currently also without a chair as she is no longer in that role.

There are supposed to be 3 partnership council members designated as committee members and all partnership council members are invited to attend the meetings. Over the past 5 years, the committee has met with the following frequency:

2018 no meetings

2019 no meetings

2020 no meeting

2021 5 meetings

2022 none to date

DMCPs Recommendation: Either eliminate this committee altogether or change its focus to support the reduction of group care efforts being undertaken in the Milwaukee community.

DMCPS New Partnership Council Committee Recommendations

DMCPS is proposing some potential new committees to replace the health and education and out-of-home care committees. These committees would be focused on the most pressing issues the agency has related to achieving its long-term community goals.

Milwaukee Prevention Services Committee: DMCPS is focused on achieving the goals of the statewide strategic child welfare transformation and keeping children in their family homes. Most of the work in this community relating to CPS prevention is done outside of DMCPS or DCF. Additionally, DMCPS has limited financial resources which are able to be dedicated to preventing families from entering the deepest levels of system involvement. This committee could look at prevention from a whole Milwaukee community landscape and make recommendations for systems improvement and processes- both within CPS and without- to better ensure that families can receive the services they need outside of the CPS system. This committee could also look for collaborative funding opportunities to support prevention work in Milwaukee County. The committee would partner with DMCPS on opportunities to gather data about the needs of families who are entering that deepest level of system involvement. Suggested stakeholder partners would include agencies doing prevention work, Milwaukee County, and peer support partners.

Reducing Group Care or Teen Support Committee: DMCPS is undergoing a transformation within its system to dramatically reduce the use of group care for children in its care. At any given time, Milwaukee has approximately 200 youth in its care who are experiencing group care placements nearly all of whom are older than age 12. The majority of those children are placed in group homes rather than residential care centers providing treatment and the majority of those group homes are not QRTPs recognized by the state. Finding foster care placements for older youth is known to be incredibly challenging. Increasingly, we are also taking into care children whose parents are not parenting in an unsafe fashion but who are asking us to remove their children from their homes because they are unable to successfully manage the behaviors of their teens. This committee would partner closely with DMCPS on creating successful interventions to help keep teens with their parents or relatives and other initiatives designed to support older youth staying in family homes rather than group care settings. Additionally, this committee could help partner on identifying new provider opportunities that best support teens staying family placements. Suggested stakeholder partners include Milwaukee County program providers, agencies supporting teens in the community, and group care providers.